

BEFORE THE
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

MAIL PROCESSING NETWORK
RATIONALIZATION SERVICE CHANGES, 2012

DOCKET No. N2012-1

**PARTIAL OBJECTION OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE TO
NATIONAL POSTAL MAIL HANDLERS UNION INTERROGATORY
(NPMHU/USPS-1)
(April 6, 2012)**

The United States Postal Service hereby files this partial objection to the above-identified interrogatory of the National Postal Mail Handlers Union (“NPMHU”) filed on April 2, 2012. The interrogatory is stated verbatim and followed by a statement of the basis for the partial objection.

NPMHU/USPS-1. Please provide all spreadsheets, schedules, maps, and other documents reviewed by witness Martin’s office or anyone else at Headquarters with respect to the development or approval of any of the AMP studies announced on February 23, including those referenced in Ms. Martin’s testimony at page 1197, lines 15-17 and pages 1202, lines 7-9, pages 1203, lines 6-14.

This interrogatory references several portions of witness Martin’s (USPS-T-6) oral testimony before the Commission on March 22, 2012. In these portions of her testimony, witness Martin discusses the proposed transportation schedules that accompany AMP consolidation studies. These schedules contain information on the proposed transportation logistics that will support the consolidations. In her oral testimony, witness Martin stated that such schedules could be provided in various formats (e.g., a Word document or an Excel spreadsheet). To the extent that this interrogatory seeks the production of the

proposed transportation schedules to which witness Martin refers in her oral testimony, the Postal Service intends to provide a response to this interrogatory.

The Postal Service objects to the remainder of interrogatory NPMHU/USPS-1 on the grounds that it is overly broad and places an unreasonable burden on the agency. Providing a complete response to this interrogatory would require the Postal Service to produce all documents that were reviewed by any person at Headquarters that relate to the “development or approval” of the consolidations that were announced on February 23, 2012. This would require the Postal Service to search the records of each and every Headquarters employee who had any role in the development or approval of any of these consolidation decisions. The likely custodians of responsive records would include: (1) any manager involved in the consolidation review process at Headquarters, (2) any staff member who reports to that manager and who was involved in any aspect of the reviews, and (3) any other postal employee who was consulted during the review process. After the likely record custodians are identified, each custodian would be required to conduct a search of any electronic and hardcopy files, including electronic databases and e-mail records, that may contain documents that he or she reviewed in connection with any of the February 23 consolidation decisions. Due to this breadth of this interrogatory, it is impossible to provide a meaningful estimate of the amount of time that would be required to identify (1) the likely record custodians, (2) the likely sources of responsive records, and (3) the responsive documents within those systems. Moreover, the search would likely yield a voluminous amount of

documents, including drafts and internal communications that would likely be protected from disclosure by, inter alia, the deliberative process privilege.

Additionally, the information sought by this interrogatory would likely shed no light on the issue that the Commission must consider in this docket, i.e., whether the proposed service changes are consistent with the policies of Title 39, U.S. Code. 39 U.S.C. § 3661(c). The fundamental foundation of the Postal Service's Request for an advisory opinion has not, and does not, change with the February 23 announcements. The purpose of this docket is not for the Commission to second-guess whether *this* specific plant or *that* specific processing operation should be consolidated, but for the Commission to offer an opinion regarding whether the service changes that would facilitate consolidation conform to applicable policies of title 39. NPMHU's interest in examining the thought processes of every Headquarters manager connected in any way to the review of each operational consolidation is not surprising, given its role as collective bargaining representative for field postal employees who may be affected by each consolidation. However, that interest is unrelated to the purposes of this docket. Accordingly, the discovery process in a section 3661 proceeding should not be expanded to accommodate it.

The Request in this docket is supported by a full justification for the proposed changes to service, plus a complete top-down analysis of the annual savings such changes would enable. Announcement of initial facility consolidation decisions merely sets the stage for implementation, a process that will continue for at least a year once it commences.

The Postal Service will respond to the request for the proposed transportation schedules discussed in witness Martin's oral testimony. It is difficult to determine how the disclosure of the additional documents sought by the remainder of this interrogatory would enhance the participants' understanding of the business case that justifies each consolidation decision, let alone how such documents would inform the Commission's opinion in this docket.

Respectfully submitted,

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